



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Issue 143 – January 22, 2007

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

In an effort to strengthen border security and to facilitate the flow of travel for visitors, the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) will begin Tuesday, January 23. The WHTI initiative calls for all citizens of the United States, Canada, Mexico and Bermuda to have a passport to enter the United States by air from anywhere in the Western Hemisphere. On behalf of the State of Arizona and the tourism industry, the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT) and our international representatives have been very involved in working to facilitate travel for visitors, while maintaining the highest standard of security. Governor Janet Napolitano has consistently supported the U.S. government's need to increase security at ports of entry and has advocated for the technology to do so, while promoting the facilitation of trade and travel to and from the United States. Land and sea travelers will also need a passport to enter the United States as soon as DHS and State implement new technology and train staff. This may be as soon as January 1, 2008 and as late as June 1, 2009.

As a Travel Industry of America (TIA) board member, I was proud to play a role in the successful lobbying effort to extend the deadline of WHTI for land and sea travelers. Although most visitors to Arizona already have a passport, AOT has written letters in support of WHTI, the extension of the deadline for travel by land and sea, and of the PASS Card, a less expensive alternative to the passport for U.S. citizens that is not intended for travel outside the Western Hemisphere. Our office continues to express concern that the PASS Card not be implemented until the new standards and technology are put in place and employees are properly trained on how to use it. We also favor a provision that will allow casual visitors to Arizona to take spontaneous trips across the border since Arizona's unique proximity to the border with Mexico is a significant reason

that visitors choose Arizona as their destination. TIA is working with the State to get more resources to consular offices around the world to expedite wait times for visas. AOT is committed to being a resource for travelers and keeping them apprised of the new regulations and we encourage Arizona's travel industry to do the same. For up to date information on passport requirements, please visit the news section of www.travel.state.gov or call the National Passport Information Center at 1-877-487-2778.

Have a great week.



Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

Teamwork for Effective Arizona Marketing (TEAM) FY 2008 Certification Workshops – SAVE the DATE

The Arizona Office of Tourism is pleased to present our FY 2008 Teamwork for Effective Arizona Marketing (TEAM) Certification workshops. TEAM workshops are designed to provide comprehensive information on AOT's matching grant program and the applications process. To further assist communities and organization with their tourism planning and development, this year's workshop will also include information on how to develop a marketing plan. AOT offers the opportunity to attend a workshop in one of five Arizona communities: Phoenix, Sierra Vista, Kingman, Flagstaff, and Show Low. Workshop attendance is mandatory for those organizations who wish to apply for matching grant funding for FY 2008. To RSVP for a workshop, please contact Sarah Martins at 602-364-3687 or via email at smartins@azot.gov. Please see below dates and locations, more information to follow.

Phoenix
Tuesday, February 13, 2007
9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Sierra Vista
Thursday, February 15, 2007
1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Kingman
Tuesday, February 20, 2007
1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Flagstaff
Thursday, February 22, 2007
1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Show Low
Tuesday, February 27, 2007
12 p.m. – 2 p.m.

Industry News

Passport Requirement for Air Travel Begins January 23, 2007

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and U.S. Department of State have issued a reminder stating that beginning Jan. 23, 2007, citizens of the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Bermuda are required to present a passport to enter the United States when arriving by air from any part of the Western Hemisphere. Since announcing this requirement last November, the departments have been encouraging all travelers to obtain passports before they travel. Since the week of Thanksgiving 2006, 83 percent of U.S. citizens, 94 percent of Canadians, 88 percent of Mexicans, and 99 percent of Bermudans have arrived at U.S. airports with passports. The air requirement is part of the departments of State and Homeland Security's Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). This change in travel document requirements is the result of recommendations made by the 9/11 Commission, which Congress subsequently passed into law in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004.

Snowbirds Cutting Winter Stays Short

Florida's mild climate and world-class beaches continue to draw Northern retirees seeking temporary refuge from harsh winter weather, but tourism specialists say many of these snowbirds are shortening their stays. Rental rates have risen to keep up with spiraling property insurance rates from recent hurricanes, pricing some retirees out of the market. Lisa Durgin, a Cocoa Beach-based Realtor who rents to snowbirds, said this January is among the slowest she has seen. Along with increased rental costs, gas prices and rising medical expenses are also a factor, said Blanka Kovarik, a retiree from Toronto. Businesses are feeling the crunch, said Rob Varley, executive director of the Space Coast Office of Tourism. "The season is shorter, and the part-time residents are not coming as soon, either," he said. (*Page 8B, Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*)

Explore! 2007 National Scenic Byways Conference

Registration is now open for the National Scenic Byways Conference in Baltimore, Maryland, May 20-23, 2007! Share ideas with hundreds of byway supporters and professionals during four days of networking and learning opportunities. Participants will be able to explore the latest strategies and best practices in fundraising, organizational development, corridor management, visitor experience, and marketing. For more information or to register for the event, visit <http://www.bywaysonline.org>.

Boston Prepares Welcome Mat for Japanese Tourists

Following the lead of other U.S. localities, says USA Today, Boston is banking on the latest Japanese sports superstar to boost its number of tourists from Japan. The Boston Red Sox last month signed pitching phenom Daisuke Matsuzaka to a six-year, \$52 million contract. The right-hander, whose first name is pronounced dice-kay, in March led Japan to the championship of the inaugural World Baseball Classic. Red Sox executives, along with city and state officials, are at "the earliest stages of trying to package tickets with travel opportunities," to attract visitors from Japan, says Red Sox CEO Larry Lucchino. "His popularity and recognition are gigantic," Lucchino says. Matsuzaka's arrival will freshen Boston's tourism pitch after 20 years of showcasing its academic institutions, historical sites and proximity to Cape Cod, says William MacDougall, CEO of Tourism Massachusetts, the agency that markets Boston and Massachusetts worldwide. MacDougall already expects Massachusetts this year will win at least 20,000 extra visitors from Japan, worth an additional \$75 million in economic impact. The new Japan connection could even help the city win non-stop air service between Boston and Japan, he says.

Spa Finder Debuts Web's First Dedicated Spa Travel Booking Site: MySpaVacations.com

Spa Finder, Inc., the global spa resource, launched MySpaVacations.com, the web's first dedicated spa travel booking site, providing a much-needed online travel booking solution for the \$48-billion global spa industry. The new site makes it fast and easy for travel shoppers to plan their ideal spa vacations according to a range of special interests, then check live room, flight and rental car availability to book vacation packages in real time. "The first wave of online travel was strictly about price, but the new wave – of which MySpaVacations.com is a part – is all about helping travelers plan their perfect vacations," said MySpaVacation.com's Director of Online Travel, Dan Chandre. "Our goal is to provide the best live spa property inventory for the millions of online travelers who want to include spa in their vacation plans." To learn more go to MySpaVacations.com to discover the full range of tools and information that online shoppers can utilize to plan and book their ideal spa vacations. If you're interested in listing your spa property on MySpaVacations.com – at no up-front cost – contact info@myspavacations.com.

Traveler Spending Grows

TIA has just released the latest edition of one of its most popular and important reports - The Economic Review of Travel in America (ERTIA)- which quantifies the economic impact of travel to and within the United States. This year's report reveals that domestic and international travelers spent over \$600 billion in the U.S. in 2005, up significantly over 2004 and projects that the trend will continue with an estimated \$740 billion in traveler spending by 2007, nearly eight percent more than 2006. For more information about this report, click [here](#).

Wine and Culinary Travelers: A Profile

TIA's new report on Wine and Culinary travelers shows that this segment makes up roughly one-fifth of the U.S. leisure traveling population and, compared to the average

leisure traveler, are more affluent, better educated, and take part in more activities while traveling, making this a large, active, and potentially lucrative market for destinations and travel marketers. In addition to providing a detailed demographic profile of these travelers, TIA's Profile of Culinary Travelers provides in-depth analysis of trip characteristics. The report will be officially launched at a press event in New York City on February 14. For more information on this report, [click here](#).

Getapassportnow.com A Huge Hit

Since its launch at the end of November, GetaPassportNow.com has received more than one million hits with close to 47,000 unique visitors. The site was developed by TIA and its strategic partner, Travel Business Roundtable, to help raise public awareness of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative's January 23 deadline for new passport requirements for all travelers entering or re-entering the United States from Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda.

"Live Your Life Best Spa Week" with Oprah Winfrey!

O, The Oprah Magazine, one of today's leading women's lifestyle magazines, is giving 50 women a once-in-a-lifetime experience: a "Live Your Life Best Spa Week" with Oprah Winfrey, at the Miraval Resort, Tucson. An A-team of fitness and life coaches will help each contest winner make lasting transformations—for a more balanced, mindful, joyous, healthy, fulfilling life. The five day, four night trip will take place in March 2007, and will be filmed for a future episode of The Oprah Winfrey Show. "Our goal is to help confident, intelligent, women live their best lives," said Amy Gross, editor-in-chief, O, The Oprah Magazine. "We try to inspire and challenge our readers, but we also encourage them to pamper themselves. A spa retreat with Oprah, Gayle King, and some of our knowledgeable contributors is the perfect way to learn how to chill out and indulge at the same time." To enter, send a stamped 3.5" x 5" postcard with full name, address, date of birth, daytime telephone number, and, in 50 words or less, why you need a spa vacation to O, The Oprah Magazine, P.O. Box 1708, Sandusky, OH 44871-1708. Winners will be notified by phone on or around February 27, 2007. Complete contest details and rules can be found in the January 2007 issue of O, The Oprah Magazine, page 210, or send a self addressed, stamped envelope to the above address. No purchase is necessary and all entries must be postmarked by February 12, 2007 and received by February 16, 2007.

DHS to Launch Traveler Redress Inquiry Program

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has announced it will launch the DHS Traveler Redress Inquiry Program (DHS TRIP), an easy to use, single point of inquiry for travel-related issues. DHS TRIP was developed to provide a central gateway to address watch list misidentification issues, situations where individuals believe they have faced screening problems at immigration points of entry, or have been unfairly or incorrectly delayed, denied boarding or identified for additional screening at our nation's transportation hubs. DHS TRIP is designed to provide an opportunity for individuals who have been repeatedly identified for additional screening to file an inquiry with DHS through a single process in order to have erroneous information corrected in DHS systems. Beginning Feb. 20, 2007, DHS TRIP will serve as the central processing point

for redress inquiries and route requests for redress to the appropriate DHS components, where they will be reviewed to reach a determination about a traveler's status. Individuals will have easy access to information collected through the DHS TRIP online system. As indicated in the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), law enforcement information that is already exempt, and could potentially allow a terrorist to avoid detection, will remain inaccessible. Additional details, including how to file and track the progress of an inquiry, will be available at the program's launch. DHS TRIP will share information it receives with the Department of State and airport and airline operators, as needed, to resolve issues. DHS TRIP will function in accordance with the routine uses identified in the applicable Privacy Act System of Records Notice (SORN) which, along with the NPRM, has been submitted to the Federal Register and will soon be published. To view the SORN and the NPRM, logon to www.regulations.gov.